

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF COMMITTEE BILL #5144
An Act Concerning an Appropriation to Expand the Nurturing Families Network
Testimony before the Select Committee on Children – February 26, 2009

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I want to thank the committee for hearing my testimony in support of this bill which would expand the Nurturing Families Network. As Connecticut's State Leader for Parents as Teachers I have provided services, training and technical assistance for home visitation programs for over 20 years. These include Nurturing Families programs and Family Resource Center programs. I have had the pleasure of a close association with the Children's Trust Fund staff for several years and have been involved with their planning for training, evaluation and record-keeping. They have a truly unique system of services and support that I have not seen in any other home visitation program. Expanding these services and this system of training, support and evaluation would benefit Connecticut's families and the state in far reaching ways.

What I can share with you is my knowledge that the Children's Trust Fund provides training for their staff – program managers, clinical supervisors and home visitors – that is wide-reaching and continual. Their evaluation is a process that is imbedded into the programs in a manner that ensures that the input from every visit is recorded and available for review. The system that they have put in place - and that they are updating even as we speak - is more extensive than any I have ever seen in our field. The third area that Children's Trust Fund excels in is support for their program staff. In a field where the home visitors are often "on their own" Children's Trust Fund's system provides not just on-going supervision but clinical supervision which is vital when working with families who are experiencing life-trauma almost every day. In addition, their technical assistance staff provide regular opportunities for the staff to share their experiences, to release the stress their work builds up, and build upon the skills needed to work with the highest-need families.

Please help these families – and the state of Connecticut – by expanding these valuable programs to all those parents who need this vital service. I can promise you that Children's Trust Fund will see that they receive the best research-based curriculum, the most supported staff and that they will benefit from the excellent evaluations the University of Hartford provides. Children's Trust Fund pours hours of work and consideration into every area of their services and programs in order to respond to the overwhelming and complicated needs of these families. I can assure you that many more families will be more stable, many more children will come to school prepared to learn, our work force will be ready for the challenge, and our economy will benefit from the services this bill will provide. Thank you for allowing me to testify.